

VZCZCXRO6070
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHKB #0641 1170223
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 270223Z APR 06 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0238
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000641

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [AJ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: IRANIAN DEFENSE MINISTER VISITS BAKU

Classified By: ADCM Joan Polaschik, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Iranian Defense Minister Mustafa Najjar visited Azerbaijan April 19-20 and met with President Ilham Aliyev, Defense Minister Safar Abiyev, Chairman of the Parliament Oktay Asadov and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov. The local press reported that Najjar's meeting with President Aliyev focused on the development of relations between the two states in the political, economic, energy and other areas. The local press noted that Iranian President Ahmadinejad will follow Najjar to Baku on May 3, when Ahmadinejad will attend the May 3-5 Heads of State meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization. The media has been full of wild speculation about linkages between the two Iranian officials' visits to Baku and Azerbaijani President Aliyev's visit to Washington. In some press reports, Najjar and Ahmadinejad are using their visits to urge Azerbaijan not to join the U.S.-led anti-Iran coalition; according to other press reports, Najjar asked Aliyev to serve as intermediary between the U.S. and Iran.

¶2. (C) According to the Azerbaijani translation of a press interview, Najjar said that because Azerbaijan is Iran's "closest neighbor and brother.... Ilham Aliyev could persuade the United States to understand Iran's position." Najjar told the press that Iran had not made this request of Azerbaijan but he believes that Aliyev's visit to Washington will reduce tensions. Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Novruz Mammadov told the Charge that Najjar's comments in the interview were poorly interpreted and that he did not call on Azerbaijan to play a mediating role with the United States.
HYLAND